

TO:

femme flicke 99 hancock st #4 cambridge ma 02139-2226

FEATURING: anna grace and jim mckay of *girls town*, chantal akerman, finding indie queer video, plus the latest films by tammy rae carland, lucy thane, and sarah jacobson.

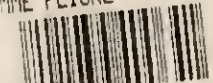
femme flicke

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FEMME FLICKE

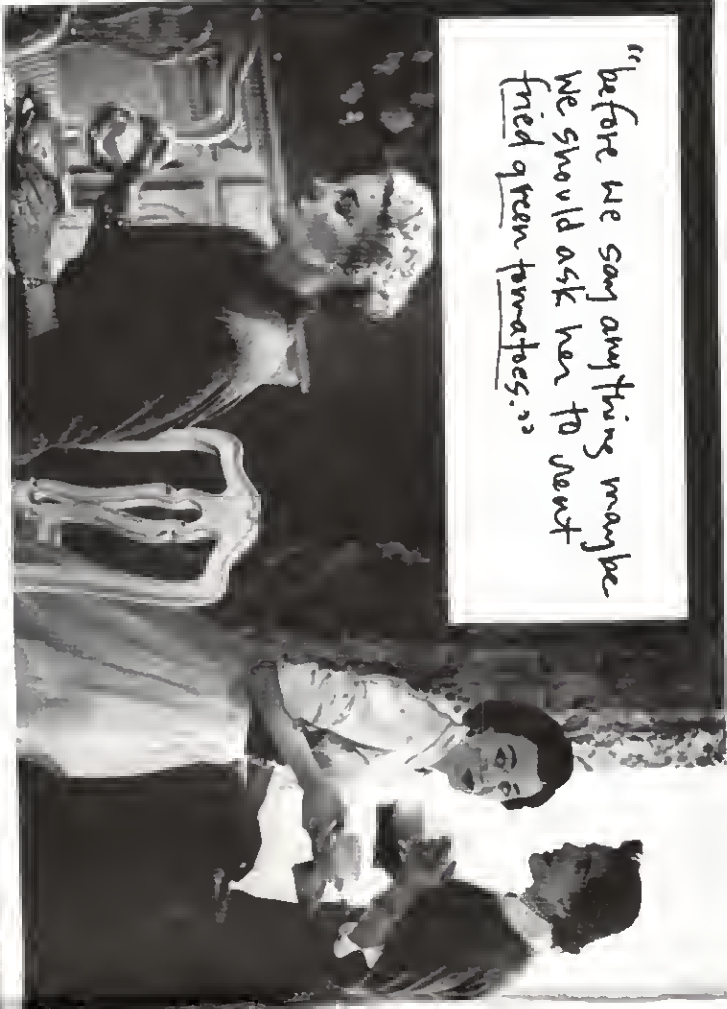


2201039402641 ISSUE 6
Powell's 01 SPJ-ZINES

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"before we say anything maybe
we should ask her to next
fried green tomatoes."



CHAT POWER



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Contributors' Top Ten Films

Matthew Fauver contributed the Film Guides to Mpls and DC and has a distinct appreciation for films made in the 60s.

Weekend (Jean-Luc Godard)
Faces (John Cassavetes)
Sans Soleil (Chris Marker)
Blowup (Michaelangelo Antonioni)

A Report on the Party & the Guests (Jan Nemac)
Soy Cuba/I Am Cuba! (Mikhail Kalatozov)

Safe (Todd Haynes)
The Color of Pomegranates (Sergei Paradjanov)

Who's That Knockin' at My Door? (Martin Scorsese)
The Society of the Spectacle (Guy Debord)

Jenny Rogers contributed the article in the issue on Michael Rapaport's mockumentaries and the review of *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*. As you can see, she has a definite soft spot for French films.

Gun Crazy (Tamra Davis)
Breathless (Jean-Luc Godard)
Heathers (Michael Lehmann)
I Can't Sleep/Je nai pas sommeil (Claire Denis)
The Silences of Palace
Eric Rohmer's onvre (especially *La Collectionneuse*)
Isabelle Huppert
Claude Chabrol films
Chantal Akerman's films

Scott Hamrah wrote Chantal Akerman is Missing. He's co-editor of *Hermenaut* zine and writes a regular film column for *Utne Reader*. Here are his Top Ten Movies of 1976.

News from Home (Chantal Akerman)

The Killing of a Chinese Bookie (John Cassavetes)
Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese)

Duelle (Jacques Rivette)
Noro-Eet (Jacques Rivette)
Eraserhead (David Lynch)
Here and Elsewhere (Jean-Luc Godard)

I Only Want You to Love Me (R.W. Fassbinder)

Buffalo Bill and the Indians (Robert Altman)

Kings of the Road (Wim Wenders)

Lenn Keller is a independent filmmaker in San Francisco. She contributed *Make Your Own* to this issue.

Sunset Boulevard (Billy Wilder)

Sugar Cane Alley (Euzhan Palcy)

Antonia's Line (Marleen Gorris)

Seventh Seal (Ingmar Bergman)

Black Orpheus (Marcel Camus)
Barton Fink (Joel Coen)
Stranger than Paradise (Jim Jarmusch)

Mississippi Masala (Mira Nair)

Daughters of the Dust (Julie Dash)

Children of Paradise (Marcel Carné) ★

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INSIDE: letters to the editor...she's real, worse than queer...mary jane's not a virgin anymore...lady (out)laws and faggot wannabes...finding indie queer video...film guide to washington dc...film guide to minneapolis, mn...flickenews...chantal akerman is missing...highly recommended reading... film reviews...jim mckay: the man behind girls town...anna grace...rapaport's mocumentaries: reimag(in)ing lives...make your own...why organize a film show?... contributor's top ten films

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Back issue \$2ppd

#2 Maya Deren, Trinh Minh-ha, C-00 Film Corp

#4 Rebecca Gates, Half-cocked, Heavenly Creatures, Jenny Wright

#5 GB Jones, Big Miss Moviola, girls on film

Mary Jane's

Not a Virgin

Anymore

by Sarah Jacobson 100 minutes, 1996

with lisa gestein, greg cruikshank, beth allen, chris enright, marry snyder, brandon stepp, andrew david deangelo

The first feature from Ms. Jacobson, this film has been charming critics and audiences at underground film festivals and markets since august when it premiered in Chicago (Roger Ebert liked it). A sort of *Big Chill* for the kids left in the wake of the post-punk explosion, the film follows Jane, an unhip highschool senior who is, according to the press release, "unceremoniously de-virginized in a cemetery in the opening scene," and spends the next hour and a half trying to figure out her

Here's what Amy Taubin of the *Village Voice* had to say: "I fell for Sarah Jacobson's *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*, a first feature that's as awkward, raucous, and eager as its protagonist. *Mary Jane* is about a teen girl's first sexual experiences, and nothing farther from *The Lover* could be imagined."

—Oct. 8, 1996

Currently, Jacobson and her mom, are waiting to see if they got into Sundance. This is a film you'll probably be hearing more about in 1997. ★

Sarah

we

Shooting begins!

Fri, November 4

The MUNI shoots didn't work well. We couldn't position the camera like we wanted. We'll probably have to reshoot it. Tonight I buy food.

Sat, November 5

We shot the apartment interiors for Leslie's character. It was great. Everyone was in a good mood, and really creative. We shot the scene differently than I had originally planned, but the lighting was killer. Revise tomorrow's schedule/shot list.

Sun, November 6

We shot in the apartment again for Terry's bedroom, bathroom, fantasy scenes. The bedroom scene was a bear. Robin had a great idea to dolly around the bed while the character is talking on the phone, but our crude little wheelchair dolly was so noisy on my hardwood floor, it was impossible to record sync sound, and the room was just too small to steer the thing smoothly. Finally I decided to can it, we were losing time and wasting film.

Thurs, November 10

Meet with the old guy at the laundromat to get the okay to shoot. Screened last weekend's dailies with Jean and Robin at the film lab—all the apartment stuff looks great, but the MUNI scene will definitely have to be re-shot.

Sun, November 13

Shot the cafe street and the post-laundromat scenes. Hope

all my extras show up.

Mon, November 14

A morning from Hell! Our laundromat location didn't work—everybody and their mother decided to do laundry. None of the camera set-ups worked. We needed to find another location. Jean saved the day. She found another laundromat while we were breaking down the lights. We only lost a couple of hours. Somehow we got through the scene before the afternoon. Broke for lunch and then met at the cafe. That scene went a lot smoother.

Wed, November 30

We shot the ocean scene today—it was a long, cold day by the water. We got started a little late, because one of the actors got lost. And the old guy at the rental place gave us the wrong tripod head. I love my actors—real troopers.

Sun, December 11

The last day of shooting. We reshoot the MUNI scene today. Rode up and down that N Judah line all frigging day. We shot while riding up one side, then reloaded the camera and rehearsed while riding back down the other side (so we could keep the light on the same side of us for continuity). All the MUNI drivers were real cool, but some of the passengers were a pain. It's a wrap, damnit!

Post-Production

Eventually I got all my work prints from the lab and was able to start editing, which took about 40 hours total.

Still had to compose and record the

music, record sound effects, get a film to videotape transfer made for mixing on Pro Tools, a cool computer sound mixing program. I had two jobs at the time and I overestimated how much I could do. Thanks to the incredible support I received from a women of color bulletin board called Sisah Net, and a few friends, I was able to get my answer print out of heck from the lab, just in time to screen at the June, 1995 San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Film Festival to an extremely receptive crowd. Making this film wrecked my last nerve... and I can't wait to do it again! ★



ably not going to work out. She's got a couple of projects of her own she's working on. I'm stressing.

Fri, September 23

Right on! — crew are starting to send in their new schedules for October.

Sun, September 25

Met with two women (a couple) this afternoon. Both are dancers. They're good possibilities for my lead characters.

Sat, October 1

Met with Debbie about being the Production Manager. I met Debbie when we were crewing on a friend's feature and ran into her a few months ago at an independent filmmaking conference.

Mon, October 3

I met with this guy who has a ton of lighting equipment to rent cheap. We went over the script, and made a list of all my lighting needs — I got an affordable lighting package for the whole shoot.

Thurs, October 6

Debbie called; she can't Production Manage because she was offered a 'real' job... Well, I can't compete with that. Back to the drawing board.

Fri, October 7

Pick up CP16 from Film Arts Foundation for test shoot tomorrow.

Mon, October 10

The woman from the magazine got the message I was looking for her, and called. She's coming over tonight (yes!) so I can videotape her.

Tues, October 11

Terry was great—I definitely want her to be one of the leads. I'm meeting with Robin

who does camera. She wants to shoot features, and needs opportunities to shoot in film.

Wed, October 12

Called Cindy (D.P.) today, I told her I want Robin to be the main camera person. I asked Cindy if she would be interested in being a consultant.

She said no. I hope we can still be friends.

Thurs, October 13

I'm meeting with Jean (the A.D.) this afternoon, we need to divvy up tasks and work up a production schedule, breakdown sheet and script continuity forms. Gotta pick up the Hi8 camera and tape for the cast call on Sun.

Sun, October 16

The casting call went really well. I think I found one of my lead characters! Her name is Leslie... she really stood out.

Tues, October 18

Meet with Robin, we're going to check out a laundromat. Mary called me yesterday with a lead for a cafe. A friend of hers co-owns it and they're closed on Mondays, so we can shoot with no distractions.

Wed, October 19

It's getting down to the wire again, we are definitely shooting the first weekend of November. My roommate just told me she's going out of town that weekend, so I'll just use my flat for both of the character's apartments. I'm meeting with Anthony today to talk about which props we'll need to buy or borrow to dress each of the apartment scenes.

Thurs, October 20

I had to make a decision about my leads. I have to start rehearsal soon. I sat down with the videos again looking

for the two people with just the right chemistry. I decided to go with Terry from the magazine and Leslie from the casting call.

Fri, October 21

I have to order film soon and Robin doesn't have time to figure out how much (and what speed) film I'll need for each scene. Well, I want to know how to do this stuff anyway. I figured out my footage like this. I plan to shoot no more than 15 seconds per set-up. I multiply that by 3 takes, to get 45. I count the number of set-ups in each scene and multiply that number by 45. I divide that number by 60 to get the number of minutes, then break that down to feet. 400 feet equals eleven minutes and 100 feet equals 2.75 minutes, so for a 14-minute film at 2:1 ration, I'll need about 2,500 feet of film.

Sat, October 22

Meet with Robin to go over storyboard and camera angles. I'm going to the CoCo Club tonight to talk about using the space for the dance club scene.

Fri, October 28

Fax film order to Fuji. There's still a ton of stuff we have to get this weekend: a stopwatch and polaroid camera for continuity, some sharpies, chalk, tape, clip boards, a MUNI schedule, and thermoses for coffee and tea.

Sat, October 29

Script rehearsal with Terry and Leslie.

Thurs, November 3

Leave work early — pick up camera package from Film Arts Foundation. Dress the apartment for Sat and Sun's shoots.

Lady (Out)laws and Faggot Wannabes

by Tammy Rae Carland
20 minutes; 1995

with heidi arbogast, miriam basilio, carla bedrosian, tammy rae carland, elitrea frye, diana morrow, kaia wilson, melissa york, josie

from the editor of the *i (heart) amy carter* zine, this experimental video traces the historic "criminality" (and various clinical diagnoses) of female homosexuality and the unspoken state of loss within gay communities by using elements of documentary, music video, erotic film, and educational filmstrips. set to a bitchin soundtrack by lesbianic action rockers team dresch, this video simultaneously exposes, subverts, and offers a "new & improved" view of lesbianism. contact the filmmaker:

tammy rae carland
509 e. anderson #4
greencastle, in 46135 ★



Finding Indie Queer Video

Go Fish.....	\$29.99
Well Sexy Women.....	\$19.99
Last Call at Maud's.....	\$39.99
Forbidden Love: Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives.....	\$69.99
je. ru. il. elle.....	\$29.99
Female Misbehavior.....	\$89.99
When Night Is Falling.....	\$79.99
Fun.....	\$19.99
Akermania, Vol. 1.....	\$24.99
Mädchen in Uniform (Subtitled)	

This video mailorder company in Pennsylvania sells a wide variety of women-directed, independent, foreign, and lesbian-themed films on home video. The prices on most aren't bad, either.

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Philadelphia, PA 19102
800-333-8521 (phone)
215-790-1501 (fax)
tlaone@ix.netcom.com

Pre-production

Thurs, March 3, 1994

I start writing the script for *Sightings* at a coffee shop near my house. I want to continue creating new images of African American lesbians, but I want this piece to be more technically challenging. To do all I want, I'll need at least three times the money I spent on *life*.

Thurs, May 5

I finish my application for a grant from the Film Arts Foundation. At the copy place, I smile at another filmmaker, frantically making copies of her application.

Wed, June 15

Hot damn!! I just received a letter from the Film Arts Foundation saying that along with 14 other filmmakers, I've been awarded \$3,000!

Mon, July 25

I post flyers around town and place a few ads for cast and crew. It'll be great if I can hook up a crew of mostly women. I need an Assistant Director, a D.P. (director of photography), some camera assistants, a sound person, boom operator, script supervisor, and production assistants.

Sat, August 6

People are calling in response to the flyers and ads. I work up an information sheet with a production schedule, synopsis, description of cast and crew positions (experience & minimum commitment requirements). I want to shoot

the last week of September or the first week of October.

Wed, August 10

Tonnie Cindy (D.P.), Ed (gaffer), and Jean (Assistant Director) are coming over for dinner, so we can go over the script and brainstorm ideas.

Sat, August 13

I saw a young black woman in one of the local dyke magazines today — she would be perfect for one of my leads. I called the magazine and left a message.

Sat, August 20

I got a number on the machine for "that girl" in the magazine. I called it, but she has

sending in their schedules. At least that's coming together.

Sat, September 3

Drove out to the boondocks this afternoon — bought a lightmeter from this really bizarre guy who has all this amazing film equipment to sell really cheap. Having a lightmeter will mean I won't have to rent one. When I'm checking out locations with Cindy (D.P.) this will help me figure out the different kinds of filmstocks we'll need.

Fri, September 9

Location scouting today — went out to this really cool place by the ocean called "dog heaven", there's all these paths right by the water where people walk their dogs — it's gorgeous. I still need a dance club, cafe, an apartment, and a laundromat.

Mon,

September 12

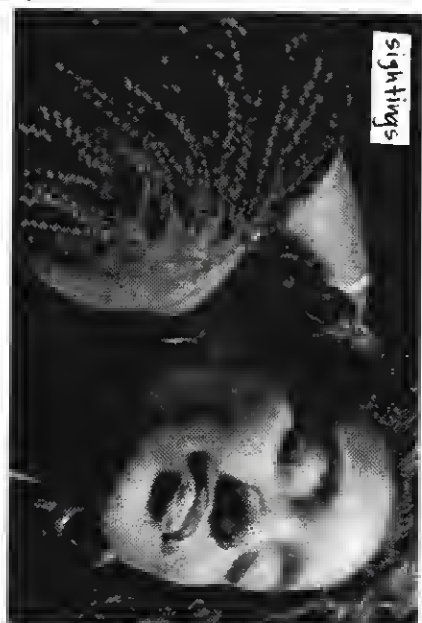
Got some more headshots in the mail today — a few of them might work out as walk-ons, but where are my leads?!

Thurs, September 15

Less than two weeks from when I planned to start shooting — there is just no frigging way. I don't even have a cast yet. I'll shoot the last week in October or the first week in November — got to do this before the holidays, when everybody's schedule will get really impossible.

Tues, September 20

Aarrgh, I'm tearing my hair out — Cindy, my D.P., is prob-



Make Your Own

by Lynn Keller

Making a film can take over yr life, ruin friendships, and essentially turn you inside out. But Lynn Keller, an indie filmmaker from San Francisco shows us it's all worth it. Her first short *He and her most recent Sightings* have been kils at gay and lesbian festivals across the country (and abroad).

Hey grllz, this is a portion of my journal from 1994 when I shot my second short, *Sightings*. A 14-minute piece, shot in color on 16mm, it's about two African American lesbians' humorous attempts to connect romantically. When I was asked by *jeune flicke* to write about my filmmaking experiences, I was psyched, because I think that demystifying the process will encourage more women to make films.

Way back in '86, I was majorly inspired by Spike Lee's film, *She's Gotta Have It*. Though not the greatest piece of cinema, it was visually exciting and innovative, especially in the representation of American blacks. Yes, I had a few problems with some of the content, still Spike had written, directed, and produced a financially successful independent film, on a paltry budget of \$75,000. In the process, he trained a number of people on set. When challenged about sexism and homophobia in the script, he replied, "...do what I did, if you don't like it, make your own..." Like it or not, we can't expect one filmmaker to depict all of our experiences, aesthetics, concerns, fantasies, etc. So if there's something you want to see on screen, you want to see on screen, make it!

Before I get to the diary, let me first warn you, making films can be addictive. It's harrowing and exhilarating, and definitely not for the faint of heart. You've got to have a

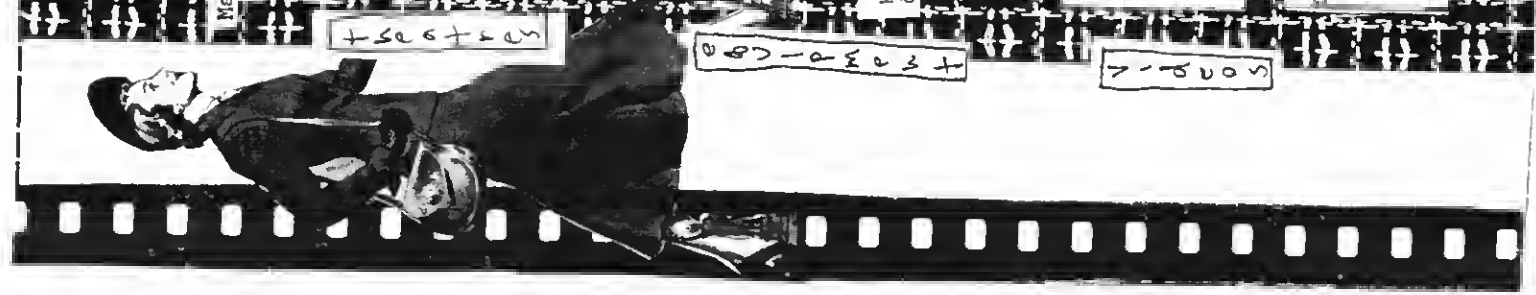
strong vision and have the stamina to see it through. Filmmaking is both an art and a craft, so there's a hell of a lot to know, and you could easily spend your whole life learning it. It's also a collaborative art, so there are many roles to play. You can write, produce, direct, edit, design sets, record

sound, etc. There are as many ways to approach filmmaking a film as there are filmmakers, but I'd like to offer one suggestion for those just beginning.

Preparation (planning and organization) is the most crucial factor in getting what you envision onto the screen. I worked as a P.A. (production assistant) on a few projects before making my own film and when you're on location, things get unwieldy fast. The more organized you are the better.

I decided to make my first film, *He*—an experimental narrative about a day in the life of a black French lesbian in San Francisco—while I was on

unemployment in 1992. To prepare myself, I watched a lot of films, did a ton of reading (everything I could get my hands on) about technical stuff and production. I wrote a short and simple script so I could produce it at the level of my knowledge and resources. I tracked down places I could get equipment for cheap (or free). I put flyers around for crew and cast (offering experience, food, fun and a copy of the final product in exchange for work). Then I just went for broke. I finished it in just 3 months, but I knew my second film would be more complicated.



Film Guide to DC

Matthew Fauver

Washington suffers if you ask me ... Lets see. For pure viewing purposes you can see lots of great films at the museums & embassys here. Kesp an eye on the Nat'l Gallery, the Hirschorn/Smithsonian, & the American Film Institute (AFI). The AFI costs \$5 but the galleries are usually free.

Ever Tuesday night at Las Cruces Mexican restaurant (1524 U street NW) the Psychochronio Film Society screens a film on monitors for free. Call them at 202-736-1732 for info. Also the Bardo Bar & Rest in Arlington shows 2 films back to back outdoors on fri & sat for free 703-527-9399. Hops-fully the Biograph Rep theatre will reopen in a new location in the next few months but for now thats about it...

Also get in touch with the people who put on I AM EYE screenings of local films every month or two at 406 7th Street NW... I don't know anything about these people yet but I've seen films for the Cinema Lucinda Society. Write them at po box 19527 W, DC 20036

Camera and editing equipment is a bit harder to get in this town for cheap (or I just can't get hooked up) but try the various schools

Corcoran 202-428-9444
American 202-885-1000
George Wash 202-994-1000
Howard 202-806-6100

Theres a great video store in Alexandria (20 min. train metro ride from DC) called Video Vault that has all the famous Am. Indies, a great selection of foreign titles and an impressive array of odd titles including exploitation films & b-movies. Its a long ride but its worth it...the only other decent video store in town is Tower cause its cheap.

Now the best kept secret in DC...The Library of Congress Motion Picture department. By simply saying you're doing re-research for a public publication (zines count too!) you can set up a private screening of any film they own (and they own quite a few fucking titles!) and its all for free. Call them M-F 8-5 at 202-707-5522.....

Film Guide to

Access is much easier here for film & video equipment. The Intermedia arts collective has complete video editing facilities but I'm not sure what it takes to get in the rooms, call them at 612-871-4444 or stop by (Lyndale ave & 28th street & 6th) The best (& cheapest) place for both film & video & classes is MMAAC (midwest media artists' access center) at 2388 university ave in St Paul. They have complete stuff from PXL camera to Arri-flex 35mm camera and its cheap. You rent per day & you can volunteer time to earn rental credit. They also have a complete darkroom for B&W Photography. Contact Steve at 612-644-1912.

Both the MPLS college of art & design (MCAD) & the MPLS Community college have complete 16mm & video production equipment. MCAD is very well equipped but pricey. MCAD..1-800-874-6223 MPLS Comm. College 612-341-7000

Try MMAAC or the new MN Coalition for Independent Filmmakers (Martt..612-870-7288) for your best chances at cheap equipment. For film development & used equipment try Film & Video Services on N Central Ave. 612-789-8622

Minneapolis really shines when it comes to both movie theatres & video stores too. For video Intercontinental is the amazing local art store, specializing in foreign, oddities, & kung fu. They're on Cedar Avenue on the Uof M campus and the owner is worth having a LONG talk with. He's amazing...Discount video on Hennepin in Uptown is a similar place with more b-movies than serious films. Try em both. For cheap \$1 for 5 days try the 3 Panorama video locations. They also have plenty to choose from...

of Sean Seberg and Rick Hudson

Hudson's private self (aside from his sexual orientation) remains a mystery to those who did not know him. Yet, after his "outing" many theorists predictably re-viewed his body of work for elements of camp and homoeroticism.

Rappaport takes this notion further, casting Hudson as a manipulator of the Hollywood system. He suggests that Hudson was savvy enough to keep his gayness a secret, knowing all along that he was leaving behind a trail of campy roles that film enthusiasts would later recognize.

Seberg, on the other hand, is cast as a victim, a woman so caught up in the Hollywood system that she couldn't keep her personal emotions out of her screen image. And after Seberg's numerous breakdowns and successful suicide, the perception culled from her films of a hysterical victim also became justifiable in the eyes of many

would-be theorists'. Rappaport (ab)uses the image of Seberg as downtrodden victim to portray her as pitiful, needy, and defenseless.

But, why is a woman who makes seemingly bad career and personal choices necessarily a victim? And why does he present



Seberg a victim of her man and her emotions in Godard's *Breathless*?

her her tragic life as romantic? How does Rappaport know that if Seberg were alive today she would look back on her past with only deep regret, rage, and cynicism? Why does Rappaport assume she'd take it all back if she could? Yes, Seberg would regret the downward spiral and suicide her life ended in, yet these tragic facts alone

it are not enough evidence to assume that if Seberg could look back at her past life today all that she would feel is bitterness, powerlessness, and sheer regret. Rappaport hints that if Hudson could pontificate on his past life he would regret his death from AIDS, but doubtfully, his career choices. After all, he was paying homage to his homosexuality all throughout his career, right? Although Seberg's and Hudson's careers and personas were polar opposites, I'm not as convinced as Rappaport that their personal lives were similarly opposite. ★

Rappaport: Reimagining the Lives

by Jenny Rogers

On the surface, Mark Rappaport's recent mockumentaries about the lives of two of the most enigmatic actors of the 50s and 60s appear amazingly similar. Yet the implications about the subjects couldn't be more

opposite.

Rock Hudson's

Home Movies

and From the

Journals of Jean

Seberg

are virtually

identical in

structure.

Both center

around look-

alike actors

(Mary Beth

Hurt as Seberg

and Eric Farr

as Hudson)

narrating

their lives

stories as the

real personal-

ities, undead,

after-the-

tion.

rator into the per-

son being discussed,

Rappaport gives him

films an "autobio-

graphical" air. The

titles themselves

propose objectivity:

Home movies and

Journals indicate

unfiltered and

untainted informa-

tion.

On the other hand,

in *Rock Hudson's*

Home Movies, Hudson,

who built his career

playing virile play-

boys, is seen as a

savvy man who con-

structed a screen

persona that was

quite separate from

his real life.

In *From the Journals of Jean Seberg*, Seberg is deemed the ever-vulnerable victim swept away by various directors' whims and male lovers.

desires. And when viewing her films, one can easily to confuse her personal history of failed marriages, miscarriages, disastrous career moves, FBI surveillance, and

eventual

suicide with

her cellu-

loid image

of manipula-

tive nymphet

and hysteric

martyr.

Rappaport

does so,

further

feeding our

misconcep-

tion that

the characters

actors play are

indicative of their

real lives.

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Hudson winking through his role as virile playboy in *Magnificent Obsession*?

Minneapolis MN

For Theatres the U of M campus is the place. The University Film Society is volunteer run and programs 2 screens nightly at Bell & Nichols Hall. If you volunteer you watch for free whenever with whom ever. They show lots of classic like *Godard*, *Parajonov*, *mean Casablanca*...things like *Godard*, *Parajonov*, *La Haine* & *Chloe Marker*. along with new stuff like *612-627-4431*. Also on the campus is the Oak St. cinema....They're a first rate Rep theatre showing classics and oddities....a diffent 2 films everynight!!....Oh ysh, the U-Film Society put on a two week 60 film festival every may. Check it out. its wonderful.

Also keep an eye on the Walker Art center and the Minneapolis Institute of Art for avant-garde films from around the world for cheap or free. The MPLS College of Art & Design has student film & video screenings regularly during the school year. Get informed and check the place out at 2501 Stevens Ave South.

Macalester College in St Paul (1600 Grand Ave) shows 3 films a week on Wed, Fri & Sat during the school year for FREE. They aren't always a good but sometimes....Well its hit & miss.

2 of the coolest places to see films are the Bryant Lake Bowling alley/bar/theatre on Lake St. (They do various programs...contact them to find out more. They would probably show your film) & the Red Eye Cinema & Theatre group on 15th Street. Again, the real eye does lots of low budget & local filmmaker screening....when....That should get you started and keep you busy....

Write a film guide to your city!
and send it to: EE 99 Huncrockst
Apt 4 Cambridge ma 02139

Flicker News



starring

Vincent
Perez
and
Kathy
Bates.

Sara
Moore is
directing
Homo Heights
starring Quentin
Crisp and Lea
Delaria.

This summer,
soleil Moon Frye
(you remember,
Punky Brewster)
directed *Lunch
Time Special*,
which she also
wrote.

Claire Danes has
been busy since the
release of *Romeo
and Juliet*. This sum-
mer, she was in
Detroit shooting
Theresa Connelly's
Polish Wedding. This
fall she'll be in
Memphis shooting
Francis Coppola's
Rainmaker. And, she
also gets to work
with **Joaquin Phoenix**
this November in
Oliver Stone's *Stray
Dogs*.

This fall, **Beaban
Kidron** (*Oranges are
Not the Only Fruit*,
To Wong Foo) started
shooting *Amy Foster*,

Thousand Acres star-
ring Michelle
Pfaffter, Jessica
Lange, and **Jennifer
Jaeon Leigh**.

In September, **Daisy
von Sherler Mayer**
(*Party Girl*) shot
Woo, a romantic come-
dy for New Line.

Also, this fall
Robert Zemeckis
finally shot his sci-
fi thriller *Contact*
starring **Jodie
Foster**, Angela
Bassett, and Matthew
McConaughey.

In September, **Allieon
Andere** (*Gas Food
Lodging*, *Grace of My
Heart*) was in the UK
shooting her latest
drama *Seeing Red*.

Mary Stuart Masterson's
next *Digging to China*
is currently being
shot in Utah by
Timothy Hutton.

Leell Glatter (*Now
and Then*) will be in
my 'hood this fall
directing her third
feature *Shakespeare's
Sister*.

Diane Keaton is pro-
ducing and starring
in *Plan B*, to be shot
in November.

Lee Grant (*Down and
Out in America*,
Staying Together) is
venturing into new
ground shooting the

ever get a chance to
see it, it's some of
the best filmmaking
I've seen. It was
really beautiful. And
it's all about
sadism, and witness-
ing sadism as a lit-
tle girl. It was the
kind of movie when-
sometimes this hap-
pens to me—you go to
the movies and you
totally cry inappro-
priately.

Yes!

That's what I was
doing! I was weeping!
And I just couldn't
stop. And also I
really liked this
movie called *The
Wife*, which is writ-
ten, directed, and
starred-in by the guy
who did *What Happened
Was*, his name is Tom
Noonan. And Wallace
Shawn is in it. I

don't usually like
Wallace Shawn, but
this is an incredibly
well-made movie. I
don't know if that's
going to get a wide
release. I saw that
at this place called
The Screening Room in
New York.

**Cool. Two movies I
can look for. Tonight
I'm going to see Gena
Rowlands' new film.**

The one that's
directed by her son,
Nick Cassavetes?

**Yeah, it's called
Unhook the Stars.**
I want to see that.

**The Boston Film
Festival is giving
her some award.**
Is she gonna be
there?

Yeah.

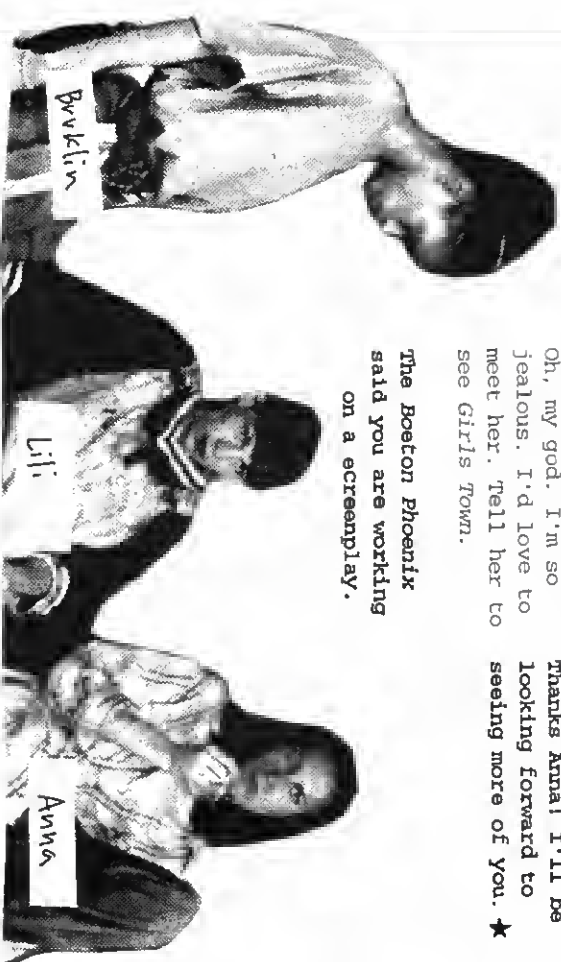
AHHH! She's my hero!
Oh, my god. I'm so
jealous. I'd love to
meet her. Tell her to
see *Girls Town*.

**The Boston Phoenix
said you are working
on a screenplay.**

What's that about?
It's about adolescent
boys and being a girl
in a group of adoles-
cent boys. It's about
all of them, equally.
They're all going
through the same kind
of terror.

**so, will you also be
continuing to act in
more of independent,
feminist-type roles?**
I have something for
scheduled for late
spring ('97), another
lead acting role in a
movie. I definitely
know that I'm not
gonna be doing the
"girl-on-the-side"
role. It's just not
interesting to me.
And I don't think the
people who are making
those films are
interested in me
either, so it's fine.

**Thanks Anna! I'll be
looking forward to
seeing more of you. ★**



film about something he's never even experienced. Interesting.

What did he do in the directing process to make the characters so real?
Nothing.

Nothing?

I think that's what made the difference. I mean, he guided us, and he opened certain doors just by creating this project and by letting us know that whatever we did was right, you know, if it felt right to us. But, who knows, maybe it's a fear that if you don't make a film that is like, palatable or conventionally

acceptable in some way, that it's not going to get any audience. But we didn't feel that way. We didn't feel pressured to make *Girls Town* cute or glamorous. We just wanted to make it real and just tell a story from our hearts.

But, I think some of those films—and I know you know what I'm talking about—it's like you see them and you know they're trying to appeal to certain audiences. And they do. I mean some of

because people don't show the same kind of confidence in them that they do for male first-time directors. So I think that can get inside you and make it hard for you to be brave about what you're talking about.

What films have you liked lately?

Um, let me think. I haven't been to the movies in a while. What have you seen?

I saw the movie *Fun a couple weeks ago*.

I missed it.

It wasn't great.

It wasn't? I wanted to see that.

I loved *I Shot Andy Warhol*.

Yeah, me too. I'm trying to think... it feels like I recently walked out of a movie and was overwhelmed. Oh, you know what I saw that was really good? This movie called *The Man by the Shore*, which is this Haitian movie by Raoul Tek. It's incredible. It's told from the perspective of this 8-year-old girl. Have you heard of it?

No.

Oh, my god. If you

romantic comedy *Broadway Brawler*, starring Bruce Willis.

Ezhan Palcy (*Dry White Season*) is preparing to shoot her next film (which she also wrote) *The Bessie Coleman Saga*, starring Angela Bassett.

Shoshana Rosenfeld, a Boston-based film/video-maker is currently editing her documentary *SCENT u'va BUTCH*, which attempts "to bust open stereotypes by capturing part of the huge, broad spectrum of women who choose to claim the label butch." She hopes to have it finished in the spring of '97.

Caroline Thompson is directing her screenplay for *Buddy*, starring Rene Russo.

Natalie Portman has been cast in Robert Redford's *The Horse Whisperer*.

Susan Emshwiller is directing *Mother's Day* starring Amy Madigan.

Mimi Leder is directing what I believe to be her first feature (for DreamWorks SKG) called *The Peacemaker* starring

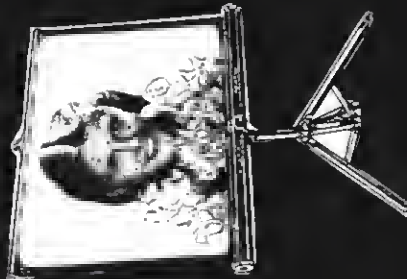
George Clooney and Nicole Kidman.

Kimberly Greene is shooting *Goldiggaz* which she co-wrote with John Singleton.

Mary-Louise Parker's next will be *Her Sister's Lover*.

Peter Jackson (*Hesvenly Creatures*) is in New Zealand remaking *King Kong*.

Gina Gershon (*Bound*) is starring in another (sleazy-sounding) Joe Eszterhas-penned film called *Original Sin*.



Jacqueline Marie is directing the screenplay she wrote called *Secrets You Don't Tell*.

Amy Holden Jones' screenplay *When She Was Good* is currently being shot by Michael Cristofer.

Sara Koch is in LA directing *Closer to Believing*.

Jennifer Hardison, a bay-area filmmaker recently shot a 40-minute documentary about girl skaters called *The Wonder Girl* for GALAXYgirl Films. "We address many topics about being a girl skate boarder from why they enjoy skating and how skate boarding effects their lifestyle and daily routines to why the sport remains male dominated. I didn't get to much opposition (just a few funny looks) when announced it was an ALL GIRL skate video." She hopes to have the video completed by early 1997.

Cheryl DuBois recently started shooting her screenplay *Friends and Other People's Lovers*.

Sarah Jacobson (*I Was a Teenage Serial Killer*) premiered her first feature *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* at the Chiicsgo Underground Film Festival this summer. She's now waiting for interested distributor's to step forward.





Michel Akeerman is Missing

by Scott Mamrah

While the fall of popular directors like Jane Campion and Allison Anders play at your local multiplex and are much-discussed in the press, the films of Michel Akeerman, one of the most important filmmakers working today, go begging for one night stands in university screening rooms, where they're ignored by even the most self-consciously hip weekly regisars, at least, video stores. His film in the gap. Most of Akeerman's major films are available on tape, including *New from Home* (1976), *Night and Day* (1992), *Tout une Nuit* (1982), *Je t'attends* (1974), and *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna* (1978). As a 5'2"-tall bisexual Belgian Jewish woman art filmmaker, Akeerman suffers from several kinds of marginalization. The fact that she routinely refuses to play the harassed minority card hasn't helped her reception in America, either. Statements like, "I can't say that I'm a feminist filmmaker... I'm not making women's films," in the *Journal de l'Art*, "And, I would never permit a film of mine to be shown in a gay film festival. It will not be ghettoized," may be admirable, but they haven't protected her in festival programming or film reviewers looking for labels to make their jobs easier.



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Sure. We worried a little bit that some young people would be like "Oh, that's bullshit." But mostly

going to attack the character of Patti was improvised. And it was done in one take. They had scripted it, but then decided on set to shake it up a little. And then, the scene where the three girls

...and particu-
larly lesbian
relation-
ships...

...tell me
about it.

... like *Bar
Girls*, and...
I didn't even
see that movie

confront, um, Richard Helms—I was just gonna say Jesse Helms (laughs)—that scene was never written and we actually had no idea what was going to happen until literally a few minutes before we shot it. In the script we had

I didn't see it either. I'm actively avoiding those movies. And I hate to say it, but a lot of those movies are directed by women. But then along comes Jim, and he makes this incredibly real

Anna Grace

plays my part in

Girls Town. She's Emma, the
white lowerclass feminist type
who flirts with danger but
is too cautious to get in
any real trouble. I had a
talk with her about the
role, the state of directors,
and her future in movies.

FF: What were you up to before Girls Town? Did you study acting?

AG: I didn't study acting after I graduated high school (in '89). I went to regular college. And I did some short programs, but, Girls Town is the first thing I've done that has any, like, profile.

Did I see your name in the credits of I Shot Andy Warhol?

Yeah, I had, like, a 20 second scene. So, if you blinked... Also I looked really different in that.

When you signed on to do Girls

Town, did you know that you'd have such a huge role in developing the story?

Anna Grace

Another problem is that her most well-known work is a monolithic, 201-minute film called *Jeanne Dielman*, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles (1975). It features the great Delphine Seyrig, star of Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* and Bunuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoise*, as an ordinary Brussels housewife going about her daily routine (it winds up in prostitution and murder) in laborious, real-time detail. Generally, when *Jeanne Dielman* gets a rare screening, much of the audience leaves an hour in, bored silly with the seemingly endless scenes of Seyrig washing dishes and cleaning house. Needless to say, it would be hard to get

those audience members back for another Akerman film, no matter how entertaining an underground film magazine tells them it is.

And, yes, her films are entertaining, but not in the sense people who are used to a diet of pandering Thelma and Louiseish Hollywood horseshit consider entertaining. A double feature of *Night and Day* and *News from Home* could serve as an excellent introduction to her work. These two features, made sixteen years apart, contain (in nice, 90-minute packages) everything that makes Akerman's films so deeply fascinating and innovative: the placidity that masks a wistful buoyancy, the unblinking investigation of emotionally

difficult situations, the oppressive long takes of uncaring cities, the finely tuned framings of unconventional domestic arrangements, and deadpan scenes that recall Buster Keaton.

Night and Day, a straightforward narrative, is, on the surface, nothing more than a romantic comedy. Julie and Jack live together in a tiny Paris apartment. They spend all day together in the sack having sex until Jack has to leave for his night job as a taxi driver. Julie passes her nights wandering around Paris, killing time till Jack gets home. Then the cycle starts all over again. It's broken when Julie meets Joseph, the guy who drives the cab during the day. She falls



je tu il elle

for him, too, and begins to spend her nights in bed with Joseph. The material for an annoying French sex comedy, sure, but Akerman doesn't sink to that level. She insistently frames their isolated lives, and refuses to have Julie feel any guilt about her impossible situation. Picture a color Jarmusch film where the deadpan style is funny instead of self-congratulatory and you're getting there.

News from Home, shot in New York City, is almost a blueprint for *Night and Day*, but without any characters. Filmed in long travelling shots, Akerman's camera takes the place of Julie, as it wanders through a city going about its business unconcerned with the film in which it finds itself. In English-language voice-over, Akerman reads from the letters her mother sends from Belgium. That's



Akerman herself

it, and there's not a dull second in it. Her scenes of mundane New York life are as revealing and affecting as a Hopper painting. Akerman, who was born in 1950, also acts in many of her films. Few directors who like to see themselves on celluloid would put themselves through the lesbian sex scenes of *Je t'embrasse*. They give new meaning to the word "naked," and refuse to make their director and star into an object of desire, at least not in a traditional way.

Chantal Akerman has made three features that I know of since *Night and Day*. From the East seems to be an Eastern European **News from Home** and has screened only in San Francisco and Minneapolis; *Portrait of a Young Girl* at the *End of the 1960's* in Brussels, which I saw at a women's film fest at the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge, MA, with an audience of maybe 25; and this year's *A Couch in New York*, which stars Juliette Binoche and (unfortunately) William Hurt and evidently isn't going to be released in the US. If only one person who reads this article rents an Akerman film, I'll be happy. ★

Chantal Akerman films available on video:

Akermania (a stupidly titled collection of shorts), *The Eighties, je tu il elle*, *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna*, **News from Home**, *Toute une nuit*, and *Window Shopping* from World Artists Home Video (800-821-1205)

News from Home and **Akermania** (\$19.98 each) and **Night and Day** (around \$20) from Fox Lorber Home Video (310-282-0550)

to these kinds of films. With what we have to work with, we're doing very well. I mean, I haven't seen as many people of color and young people at Angelika Film Center in New York as I've seen going to *Girls Town*.

But going back to the Sassy thing, we wanted to assume that young people would connect to a film that was made differently, where kids are actually shown talking for five minutes rather than being cut off continually by a filmmaking style or by an adult. I think if kids can get to it, they will like it. I know that when it comes out on video, people will get to it. The R-rating certainly doesn't help.

Did you expect an R-rating?

I expected an R-rating just because of how fucked up the whole system is. When I heard that *Melrose* to the *Dollhouse* was rated R, I was like, "ok forget it." But we made a trailer that doesn't have the word "fuck" in it once, which as you know, is an incredible feat of editing. It does, on the other

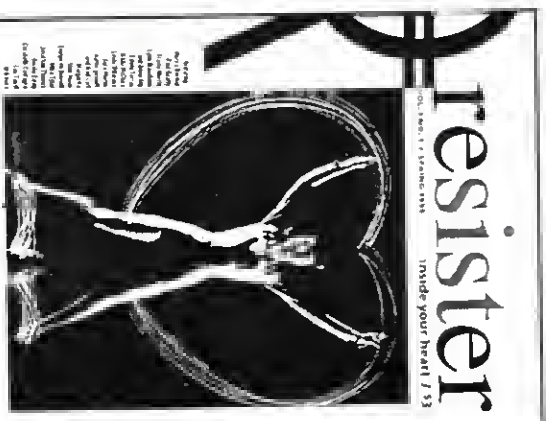
hand, have the word "rape" in it twice, and that got the trailer an R-rating. I think that's disgusting!

What are you working on now?

I'm working on getting *Girls Town* out of my life enough so that I can think. I've had a really hard time thinking of new ideas while still I'm obsessed with *Girls Town*. There is another teenage girl movie that I would really like to make, the working title is *The Other Girls*. It's about a small clique of lower class girls in New York who are outsiders by virtue of their looks—they're not in the babe category, they're not hipsters. And there's another idea I'm

working on that's very loosely inspired by, but not based on the book *Savage Inequalities*, which is about the public school system in this country and the vast difference between wealthy towns and poor towns. And the film would use that as a starting point for a story about two kids and two teachers of different classes.

Good luck, Jim!
Thanks for making *Girls Town*. ★



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who are given a script don't get to do. I guess what I'd have to say is that the actors' selflessness as a team is responsible.

Did shooting music videos prepare you well for the task of shooting a feature film?

They prepared me more in terms of what I didn't want to do.

I never worked on really big music videos. And, even though that's what I've done to pay my rent for the past seven years, I don't really consider myself a video director, because I don't really connect to what we typically see as a video on MTV.

Working low-budget on videos helped me in a practical way. But the things that were really helpful were learning a lot of technical stuff and developing a rhythm visually.

I want to do a little work association now. Let's begin with Sundance Film Festival.
Cold.

Weather-wiser?

Everything. It's competitive and kind of not about what films

are about. It's depressing because there are so many great movies there. We end up knowing about what part of dinner Harvy

Weinstein spit on rather than how great a film *American Job* is. And I don't think it's the film festival's fault, per se. I think it's the media.

Ideally our audience is teenage girls. yet practically that's the most difficult audience to reach.

Lili Taylor

Awesome. Inspiring. A professional role-model.

C00 Film Corp

I'm anxiously awaiting it's rebirth as a feature film production company.

Underlining the waiting. C00 barely exists at this point. But I hope it'll be a force to be reckoned with in the next... decade.

Michael Stipe's

Single-Cell Pictures
That's a development company within New

Line Cinema. And

they've yet to make their first project. I'm really cheering for them. Michael wants to be able to provide independent thinkers and artists with a place to make bigger films. For instance, he wants Greg Araki to shoot this script they bought. And he wants to work with directors like Todd Haynes. So, I wish them well.

October Films

I admire what they do and they've done their best with *Girls Town*.

They've had a tough time, it's a very hard film

to work and they're not a big company.

It's frustrating at times, it's like being with an independent label or something.

Are you having trouble getting to the audience you wanted?

Ideally our main audience is teenage girls, and yet practically that's the most difficult audience to reach. *Girls Town* is an immediate, sort of simple, art-house audience-getter. Teenagers don't go to those theatres. They're not attracted

...is for Movies

Stella Marrs makes these gorgeous post-cards, some of which feature movie images and simple vegan recipes (two of my favorite things!). You can buy 20 for \$12.50 and send 'em to all your friends.
Send \$1 for a catalog to:
po box 2273 olympia wa 98507



Reading

Bust

I'd been hearing about this zine for some time, but never

Resistor

One of the most intelligent zincs to come out in the past year, is

Resister from NYC.
Edited by Evelyn
McDonnell (of *The
Village Voice* and
Rock, She Wrote),
most pages in the
first issue look like
intimidatingly dense

popular, but she does know when to call a spade a spade.
\$12 for 4 issues (checks to Lisa Jarvis) from 3778 Ruby Street Oakland CA 94609
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MARLIN TALKS about love and books

modern screen

The New York Times



It's a great question. Shit. First of all, I think 95% of all films that are made suck. And a lot that comes out of the independent film world is pretty lame anyway. And oftentimes when someone has experienced something personally and they want to tell that story, the telling of it can be

It's a great question. Shift. First of all, I think 95% of all films that are made suck. And a lot that comes out of the independent film world is pretty lame anyway. And oftentimes when someone has experienced something personally and they want to tell that story, the telling of it can be brought down. On the other hand, personal experience can make a work even that much better. I'm thinking specifically about

it's a great question. Shit. First of all, I think 95% of all films that are made suck. And a lot that comes out of the independent film world is pretty lame anyway. And oftentimes when someone has experienced something personally and they want to tell that story, the telling of it can be brought down. On the other hand, personal experience can make a work even that much better. I'm thinking specifically about Sapphire's writing. She's writing about her own experiences but also writing fictional stories that are very much informed by her experiences. Her work is incredibly strong because she's a real

ly talented writer outside of the issues she's dealing with. But I do think that because this was not my experience, I was able to help create it with an outside view. To be truthful, what I brought to the project originally was much more didactic and well-intentioned and kind of annoying than what we turned out. The women in the project made it more what it is. And then my ability to guide it story-wise, I guess.

What exactly did the three actors bring to it?

It was the process more than the people. Although I think they were all incredible, the workshop really allowed us to

the story. Each actor got to really develop her character on her actor in a really full way, in a way that actors



maybe Emma, but just what MTV helped start to happen, in terms of cultures clashing and fashions merging.

Yeah, I thought about that when I was watching the film, like "would these three women really be friends?" But by the end, it made more sense.

That has by far been the biggest critique of the film. I find it very telling that people react as strongly as they do. For instance, I saw an AT&T commercial the other day that was like a soft-focus, suburban, Spielbergian vision

and all these white kids playing ball, and the token black kid playing with them, and everything was hunky-dorry. And it was so fucking fake and really insulting. And then we have the Benneton campaigns. All these things that really abuse that set-up much more because they're presented without a context and for the sake of selling something. So I find it interesting that people are not compelled to critique that, or did not find that personally offensive. And yet with *Girls Town*, par-

ticularly older white people are really stuck on this thing. Like, the New York Times said "this is not realistic." Well, first of all, it's a movie. It's one story. And I've had dozens of people come up to me at the screenings and say "My friendships were exactly like that." And I've had dozens of others say "That was not my experience at all." But it kind of doesn't matter. Yes, you're asked to believe it. And if you don't, why don't you? Let's question what our own preconceived notions are.

The thing about *Girls Town* is it has a realist basis. And there's no doubt about that there are things in the film that step out of that realism. And to me that's okay. That was desired. It's not a documentary. We definitely were trying to make a statement with the clique of people we were portraying. And I don't think it was done in a lazy way. Obviously Emma

and Nikki were close, and Patti and Angela were close, and then when Nikki's gone, Emma's more of an outsider, but she's still a good friend. We didn't want Emma

to be this girl who had to be "down" and talk in street to fit in. Yeah, maybe in some ways it is ideal, because there's a reality to the fact that people who hang together become all alike. And yet, that's not always the reality.

When I was watching the film I got the impression that there was a romantic relationship between Emma and Nikki. Was there talk of that?

There was talk in the beginning about a relationship between some characters, and I was actually thinking about Angela and Patti (laughs) at one point. We decided with those two characters it wasn't realistic in terms of that year in school.

Two years from now, who knows where those characters are gonna be? Emma became the one character who seemed more likely to... "go to that place" (laughs). But she already had all this other baggage as a character, like being the one who was aware of women's issues. When we were dealing with the friendship between Emma and Nikki, any lesbian element was not really stated.

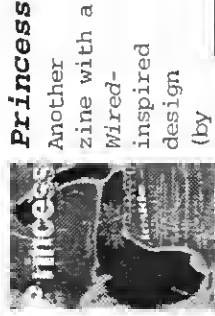
pools of text. But dive in somewhere, and I guarantee you'll find a treasure, like Tribe 8's Lynn Breedlove's challenge to Kevin Costner, a novella (yes, novella) by Breedlove and Anna Joy, a diary from an attendee at the 4th UN World Conference on Women, and thoughts on the NY Film Festival. #2 out this fall. \$3 from PO Box 1479 NYC 10276.



Women in General

In high school I didn't belong to a clique. I hung with the cheerleaders, the queers, the dirtballs, the newspaper staff, the alternative kids. That all-encompassing-feel is a lot like W.i.g., a new magazine out of Utah, of all places. It melds together fresh thoughts on sports (particularly snowboarding), music (particularly alternative women-driven bands), and culture (particularly feminist politics and art). And they pull it off in a crazy, colorful design rem-

queer goings-on in Canada and the US, from zines to records to movies to t-shirts. Lots of stuff you probably don't even know you need. Write to PO Box 55 Station E Toronto Ontario M6H 4E1 Canada



Princess

Another zine with a Wired-inspired design (by Melissa York of Vitapup and Team Dresch fame) is Diana Morrow's baby, Princess. The impressive premiere issue



Images in the Dark: An

Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video

by Raymond Murray Penguin Books, 1996

First conceived as a guide to gay and lesbian movies on home video, this 600-page motherbook is that and, oh, so much more. Murray has a refreshingly sharp voice that busts out of the typically dry encyclopedia-ese found in other such collections. The author says the book can be "used as a handy queer video guide, a research

source, or a good read." He's right. In fact, this book quickly became the one on my floor I refer to most often. \$19.95 Penguin Books 375 Hudson St NYC 10014 ★



Bitch Nation

More reverent fun from media queen GB Jones, this is a catalog of

Film Reviews

[From Hollywood to the Underground]

Some filmmakers work within the system (ie, the capitalist movie-making machine known as Hollywood) to subvert the status quo. And others don't give a shit about the system and instead create new forms. Both have their advantages. Here are some examples of both.

Anything Boys Can Do...

Ethan Minsker, 1996
with tribe 8, Vitapup, thrust, the voluptuous horror of karen black, maul girls, and nicole blackman
1 hour, 11 minutes



Candleshoe

Norman Tokar, 1977
with jodie foster, helen hayes, david niven
1 hour, 40 minutes

Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives

Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie, 1992



1 hour, 25 minutes

I adore Jodie Foster. This girl don't take no shit. Yes, this is standard Disney schlock, but fourteen-year-old Foster takes girl power to the (Disney-allowed) limits. As a tough LA street kid who gets picked up by some thugs to impersonate the granddaughter of some rich lady, she knows how to get what she wants. She sports button-down shirts and blazers instead of dresses, and drinks cherry Coke when offered tea. Who says Jodie ain't no dyke? Even as a teenager, she was fine-tuning her savvy tightrope walk between action-comedy shallowness and heartfelt emotion.

This is an awesome movie! With intermitted scenes of

fictionalized story of lesbian love based on the pulp girl-love novels of the 50s, the bulk of this documentary is in the fascinating stories of (now) middle-aged lesbians who read said novels as teens. Here they reminisce about their first lesbian affairs, the 1950s and 60s dyke bar scene, men's reactions to their coming out, and, of course, heartbreak. Seamlessly edited between the interviews, historical news footage, newspa-

A documentary of women in the underground scene of New York's lower east side, this film cuts between live performances (music and spoken word) and behind-the-scenes interviews with the artists in their "natural" surroundings. With no particular bias toward one musical genre, *Anything Boys Can Do...* juxtaposes the music and politics behind in punk, experimental, goth, ska, and more.
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social and political overhang of sexism and how it exists in our world, it makes it that much more confusing and fascinating and difficult. So, I don't know what it is that draws me to women's issues in general and girl's issues in specific. I think maybe just the volatile quality of that time is exciting to me.

Certainly in the media and society, there have been many influences for me. Sassy magazine was really a big influence, in terms of the changes that they made to a very specific genre and how they opened things up within the context of the magazine world. I think when you make a film, you're faced with a lot of pressures because of the expense involved and it's very very difficult for people to remain extremely pure and do exactly what they want to do. And the magazine world is similar. I was a big fan of Sassy's. What they did was pretty revolutionary. And I thought they spoke to girls with respect. They showed representations of girls that

were varied. And they portrayed a reality that was different than anything that had been portrayed before in terms of showing the reality that getting a boyfriend or finding the right diet is not at the center of every young woman's life. Seemingly small things, like refusing to ever run a calorie-count or talk about fat grams, as an internal policy, were revolutionary. I connected to that,

Zines were like independent films, compared to Sassy which was more of a Hollywood movie.

lot of ones that I found out about through yours. I really liked I (heart) Amy Carter a lot. And Wiglet. And a lot of the stuff out of Olympia. Oh, you know what I loved was I'm So Fucking Beautiful, of which I've only seen one issue, but I've seen her stuff in other things and I think she's awesome.

Who is that?

I think her name is Nomy Lamm. She's got a piece in this great anthology called Listen Up. That book is incredible.

I was really inspired, in a different way, by MTV. More in terms of what not to do. Using it as a

touchstone of culture, and being able to react against that. Being able to look at how MTV has defined our culture. In a weird abstract way, the existence of MTV is responsible for the girls in *Girls Town* being able to see past their cultural and class differences and have strong friendships. I don't mean MTV in specific, because I don't think any of them probably even watch it, except

and I connected to the stories that were being told there. And then on a whole other level existed fanzines that stemmed to some degree out of the riot grrrl movement, although that followed a longer standing tradition. They were kind of like independent film, compared to Sassy, which was more of a Hollywood movie. **What zines were you reading?** Yours, and actually a

The Man Behind Girls Town

Late this summer I spoke with Jim McKay from a mosquito-infested cabin in Athens, GA where he was taking a vacation from media-circus around his first feature *Girls Town* (starring Lili Taylor, Brooklyn Harris, and Anna Grace). If you haven't seen it yet, put down this zine and go!

It's an amazing film about three high school seniors coming to terms with what it means to be friends, and in the process learning to stand up for what they believe. Before making *Girls Town*, Jim co-founded C00 film Corp with REM's Michael Stipe (see *Femme Flicke #2*) and shot music videos for bands like REM, Son Volt, and The Breeders. He talks here about how grrrl culture informed *Girls Town*, the implied lesbian relationships in the film, and why he feels compelled to make "women's films."

Jim McKay



FF: As a 30-something guy, why did the subject of late-teen-girl self discovery interest you enough to write and direct *Girls Town*?

JM: Cuz I'm a pervert. No, that's actually been asked a lot. And I don't have a really satisfying answer, to tell the truth. First of all, I think everybody should think about and explore things that are outside their own personal experience, more often. I think it often leads to great discovery, not only within the content of the work, but also personally for the creator. I feel that the teenage years are a really potent time in which a lot of change happens in a short period. And then, when you couple that general coming-of-age circumstance with

per headlines, and old photographs, the only complaint I have about this film is that I wish it was longer. I wanted to hear more and more and more about these women's lives. Every young woman questioning her sexuality should see this. This is the proof, you're not a freak! Women for generations have been going through what you're going through. *Forbidden Love* would make the perfect double feature (still, less than two hours) with *Lady (Out)laws* and *Faggot Wannabes* (see review in the issue) for your next queer-girl slumberparty. Look for it in your video store's gay and lesbian section.



Good Sister/ Bad Sister

Liza Johnson, 1996
with Angela Bales, Julie D, Marilyn Billingsley, Michelle Hanks, and Chinchilla
30 minutes

This "mockumentary" sheds some light on the insane shape

women's lives can take in a society where they are considered second-class citizens. Three women (actresses playing Courtney Love, Courtney's mom, and 60s feminist outlaw Katherine Power) reflect on the way their lives have been twisted into nonsense by patriarchal society at large. Ultimately we see that as distinct as these three lives are, they're uncannily alike.

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Liza Johnson
46 Old Fulton Place
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Swallow

Elizabeth Subrin, 1995
with Subrin, Jennifer Reeder, Laura Nix, Lia Gangitano, Jennifer Subrin, Beth Freeman
28 minutes

Shot in black and white (film and PXL video), Subrin retraces her school years (grammar-high) via memories of Sara, a fatally romantic childhood friend who was the first to develop a then-unnamed eating disorder ("I stared too long when she stuck her finger in the ketchup while the rest of us ate our

cupcakes"). Set to a backdrop of the televised feminist movement of the 70s, *Swallow* sorts through our conflicting desire to, on the one hand, save Sara and on the other hand, to be her.



The Clinic

Anjali Sundaram, 1995
with Alicia Rose, Michael Kerrick, Ralph Balcarcel
20 minutes

Through a moody, at times creepy film-noir style, this short shows the (in)distinction between one woman's physical and mental deterioration. Meanwhile, it pseudo-critiques the way both are "treated" with modern medicine. A sharp examination of the evil-yet seductive-nature of technology, *The Clinic* may frighten you from ever going to the doctor again. Contact:
Anjali Sundaram
696 S Van Ness
San Francisco, CA 94110

I Shot Andy

Marhol

Mary Harron,
1996
with lili taylor,
stephen
dorff, jared
harris



I can't get enough of Lili Taylor. And in the first film she carries, she thoroughly rises to the occasion playing SCUM Manifesto author and would-be homicidal fanatic Valerie Solanas. I can't even do this movie justice by writing about it. Just see it!

A Fucker, A

Fighter, A Wild

Horse Rider

by Dulcie Clarkson,
1996
10 minutes

Shot on super 8 and edited on video, this powerfully innocent film documents the filmmaker's attempt to rebuild her relationship with her oft-absent father in his last weeks of life. A very real look at middle class family and childhood.

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silver city, nm 88061

Fun

Rafael Zelinsky, 1996
with renee humphrey,
alicia wilt

I thought I wanted this film to be an American Heavenly Creatures. But it wasn't. Yes, it's about two teen girls who murder an unsuspecting old lady in the name of devotion to one another, but the filmmaker spent way too much time on the clinical examinations of their "insanity" and not nearly enough on the development of the friendship. I was most impressed with the performances of the two lead actors, particularly the strikingly beautiful Renee Humphrey (of Four Rooms and that really lame TV show, Cybill).

Ife

Lenn Keller, 1994
5 minutes



Like so many young (and poor) women who want to make movies, Lenn Keller wanted her first film to reflect her reality, as opposed to the "realities" pumped out by Hollywood. Made on no budget, Ife is the story of a young black French lesbian who's recently come looking for romance in San Francisco. Very charming.

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Girls Town

Jim McKay, 1996
with lili taylor,
bruklin harris, anna
grace
1 hour, 25 minutes

I've Heard

the

Mermaids

Singing

Patricia Rozema,
1987
with sheila
mccarthy,
paule bail-
largeon
1 hour, 21
minutes



Patricia Rozema's first film, I've Heard the Mermaids Singing, is the story of an adult woman coming-of-age. Mermaids begins as Polly Vandersma (Sheila McCarthy) gets a job as a "girl Friday" for a prestigious art gallery owner. Her new boss, Gabrielle (Paule Baillargeon) is a mysterious beauty whom Polly, out of sheer admiration, refers to only as "the Curator."

Gabrielle slowly

opens up to Polly, admitting her fear of aging and failure, introducing Polly to her young girlfriend, and showing Polly her paintings, which no one else has seen. Polly quickly reciprocates, sending "the Curator" an anonymous envelope full of photographs she's taken which, "the Curator"

unknowingly deems

"write made flesh."

The rejection sends Polly spiraling into an identity crisis, causing her to throw out her camera and burn her photographs.

The endearing theme throughout the film is self-acceptance. At the beginning, Polly (naively?) has it in heaps. But in her new chi-chi surroundings, Polly's desire to please makes her an easy target of the hipsters' own fears and failures.

Positioning "the Curator" as desired object, and Polly as undesired object, Rozema underscores their similarities as women facing aging, constant scrutiny, and looming failure. And Polly's growing sexual feelings toward "the Curator" only emphasize "the Curator's" own

ambivalent

feelings

about men

and con-

fused

affection

for her

young girl-

friend.

Eventually,

ugly duck-

ling Polly

emerges as

the swan as

she learns

of "the

Curator's"

insecurities. So

while Polly expected

to learn from the

curator, it was actu-

ally Polly who forced

her to fully realize

what beauty and

acceptance really

means.

The cinematic beau-

ty brimming through-

out Rozema's recent

crowd-pleaser When

Night is Falling is

absent in I've Heard

the Mermaids Singing. Yet, ironically, this lack of beauty works to Mermaids' advantage, making the story of unaccepted, ugly duckling who never needed acceptance before she met a beautiful career woman, all the more poignant and real.

-Jenny Rogers ★